

Liang, X. (2019). *A Discourse Analysis of News Translation in China* (1<sup>st</sup> ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351021463> (pp.238)

Discourse analysis of news translation has drawn the attention of translators, interpreters and scholars of applied linguistics over the past decades, evolving into a more methodical subject due to its embeddedness within multidisciplinary approaches. Liang Xia's book, *A Discourse Analysis of News Translation in China* provides substantial evidence as to the role of translators in translation studies (TS) and the influence of institutions, ideology and culture in the process of translation. The author argues that translators are constrained by institutional authority and culture. Despite the purported idiosyncrasy of ethnographic approaches, Liang suggests that these actually allow deeper insights into news translation discourses and the role of translators. Further, this book touches upon the role of translators, process of linguistic textual representations, and its product within the cultural paradigms. The author convincingly argues that manipulation is woven into the warp and woof of cultural norms and perspectives which in turn influences translators so that they exploit it at ideological, linguistic or cultural fronts. Therefore, on account of its expansive coverage of important issues in the field, this book significantly contributes to the field of TS. The theoretical underpinnings the book introduces help explicate the close connections between critical discourse analysis (CDA) and TS. It proposes a model to analyze news translation from a sociological perspective and highlights the importance of context-based analysis, foregrounding key components such as linguistic features, connotations of prevalent discursive practices and tactful maneuvering of power relations, well-evidenced in translation.

Chapter 1 provides a comprehensive history of trends in translation. The reader is apprised of the basic historical developments in the field, from the emergence of primary translation in 2500 BCE to discourse analysis of news translation in 1960s (Baker & Saldanha, 2019; Munday, 2016). Observing that it is a new discipline, the author notes that it borrows from other disciplines and is based on the theoretical foundations of Bible and literary translation. This chapter maps the movements which have transformed the field of TS and provides evidence and examples to substantiate the key arguments put forward therein. While touching upon the historical background of translation, the author outlines the focus of the study and briefly mentions news discourses translation through the selected newspaper Cankao Xiaoxi (CKXX). Three major steps of analysis, namely translation as a product, process, and dynamic social act in the cultural context, are further highlighted in the discussion. A comprehensive note on CKXX, historical evolution of the newspaper, reasons of legitimacy in China and format and features of inner pages with illustrations are some of the prominent aspects which have been covered within the chapter.

Chapter 2 discusses the review of literature and its contextual connection with previously conducted studies pertaining to the TS. It is important to mention that all the significant gaps within the existing review of literature have been given due attention. Various phases of TS from the very outset to where it is positioned today as an academic discipline have been concisely presented. In addition to highlighting the research gaps, this chapter focuses on the

influence of social, cultural, political and ideological aspects of translations. The author points out the manipulative nature of translation and notes that cultural variables determine the discrepancy between the original text and its translation. The author adds that such discrepancies can often be traced back to the position and intent of the translator.

Connecting the argument with the previous chapters, the author explicates a strong link of TS to CDA in Chapter 3. In this chapter, all the theoretical connections and general principles of CDA are presented through illustrations. In particular, the discursive practices of language viewed through Fairclough's theoretical framework of CDA and supplemented with the comprehensive framework of TS are presented. For example, the chapter focuses on Fairclough's three-dimensional model of CDA and shows how power emerges in the context of institutional interaction. In addition, this chapter presents the connection among CDA, news report and TS. While exploring the role of CDA, the author discusses how CDA theorizes news, and reveals its conventions and approaches. Finally, the author suggests that in order to understand the complexity of translation activities (p. 63), it is essential to incorporate ethnographic methods into CDA-based translation analysis.

The author's descriptions are more intensive in Chapter 4. He presents a method of the study which is substantiated through the proposed model, i.e. product-process-power which is the conceptual framework on the study of news translation. All the significant arguments, elaborating on how CDA can be used as an approach to analyze news translation as a social phenomenon, are clearly presented. He further presents a three-dimensional method based on culture, context and text. This chapter not only illuminates textual discrepancies pertaining to translation product but also examines the institutional and sociocultural features of translation process. Drawing upon the contextual relevance, the author discusses all factors, particularly the role of press, influencing the translators with respect to socio-political settings. The author concludes this chapter by reflecting on the analysis of translation action in terms of social practice so as to disclose further power relations that might manipulate the information in the newspaper.

Chapter 5 examines the findings of textual analysis and the basic understandability of translated news as a product. It further highlights how textual manipulations occur through the linguistic choices at lexical-grammatical levels and how changes are made for different contextual settings based on various procedures. The example presented through the translation of Chinese source is catchier and interesting and highlights the entire process explicating how changes are made on the lexical level. It indicates various translation discrepancies known as manipulation strategies which are commonly identified through a comparison of source text with translated text ranging from addition and subtraction to alteration.

Chapter 6 provides readers with orientation to news making producers and the holistic translation process. The commentary on the role of translators in translating news and the mechanism of translation are succinctly presented. The interaction of news institutions with other departments has also been discussed in detail. This chapter also illuminates the role of news institutions in the development of behavior in the process of translation, putting forward the argument that translated news is indicative of the behavior of institutions. However, the

major point of discussion in this chapter pertains to the dependence of news translation on two key components, i.e. “the voice of the institution” and “the voice of the source”. With the active involvement of the voice of institution, the voice of source is muted or suppressed to prevent source information.

Chapter 7 explores the internal logic of the Chinese media system and the motivation of the manipulators. The author dilates upon the function of manipulation and describes different ways in which it is employed. It proceeds to the last stage of the analysis, considering the respective sociocultural and sociopolitical contexts in which the news translation is produced, and explores how power relationships manipulate and influence translation practices in China (p. 122). The author emphasizes that the selection of a text matters a great deal with translators deciding upon various linguistic strategies to overcome the linguistic problems in the process of translation. The author further observes that manipulation ranges from textual adaptation in adjusting the movement of the information to the multilayered concept of cultural confrontation. Arguing that the role of press is multifaceted, the author ends by asserting that policies, institutional power, and cultural influences shape the process of news translation.

The final chapter summarizes the findings of the research and states that language is an intricate entity of social life which relates directly to society and social practice. The author also discusses the product-process-power model in this chapter and relates it to the properties of decoded text and instances of conversation, arguing that this is linked to the process of manipulation. The author notes that text-based analysis helps to show that the manipulation of contemporary international news transmission is prevalent. The chapter suggests that news is manipulated, modified and then interpreted to suit specific purposes that are controlled by powerful groups, ideology and institutions.

The author provides a comprehensive figure which illustrates the process of manipulation to the core and highlights how translators exploit some linguistic choices and additive/subtraction techniques to reframe the text framed through the source text. This suggests that the role of translators is pivotal, given that they work to fulfil the purpose of the institutions they serve. The author terms this as “re-contextualization of translated news”. It is pertinent to mention that the manipulation ensues on routine basis these days where the key influence of institutions on purposive translations by designated translators cannot be underrated. The translated text reveals some of the instances exemplifying the translator’s decision-making process. Here it may be borne in mind that the source text translator is very different from the translator who is engaged in reading translated news. The author’s consideration of translators as originative writers suggests a purposeful and agentive role as they successfully disseminate and tacitly convey the intended message to readers. The strength of the book is that it treats translation as a product, and analyzes the news translation at the textual, discursive, and sociocultural levels. Another strength of the book is that it investigates how translation is produced from Faircloughian analysis embedded within a qualitative approach. The rich display of translation strategies and in-depth analysis of Chinese media on a unique newspaper make this book singular. The one discernible weakness of the book is that it does not provide a

systematic and scientific model or typology of the discrepancies between English source texts and Chinese translations. The author has adopted a classification of “addition”, “subtraction”, and “alteration” in order to capture basic changes in the translated texts. However, the definitions of these three strategies are not clearly presented. For instance, some changes seem to occur at the lexical level while others occur at the structural level or even at the discourse level. Therefore, it seems somewhat ambiguous to calculate the translation shifts on the basis of “occurrences per text of translation discrepancies” (p. 84) alone.

In conclusion, *A Discourse Analysis of News Translation in China* is highly recommended as a very good read for the aspiring researchers in TS and news discourse who seek to unpack the implicit intricacies within the subject areas. This book contains useful resources for students belonging to TS as well as discourse analysis which offers an all-inclusive hands-on experience of the treatment of the source text in the target text.

## References

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